

the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 680.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. CARTER. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

SUPPORTING AND ENCOURAGING GREATER SUPPORT FOR VETERANS DAY EACH YEAR

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 237) supporting and encouraging greater support for Veterans Day each year.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 237

Whereas veterans of service in the United States Armed Forces have served the Nation with honor and at great personal sacrifice;

Whereas the American people owe the security of the Nation to those who have defended it;

Whereas on Memorial Day each year, the Nation honors those who lost their lives in service to the Nation;

Whereas on Veterans Day each year, the Nation honors those who have defended democracy by serving in the Armed Forces;

Whereas the observance of Memorial Day and Veterans Day is an expression of faith in democracy, faith in American values, and faith that those who fight for freedom will defeat those whose cause is unjust;

Whereas section 116(a) of title 36, United States Code, provides that "The last Monday in May is Memorial Day" and section 116(b) of that title requests the President to issue a proclamation each year calling on the people of the United States to observe Memorial Day by praying, according to their individual religious faith, for permanent peace, designating a period of time on Memorial Day during which the people may unite in prayer for a permanent peace, calling on the people of the United States to unite in prayer at that time, and calling on the media to join in observing Memorial Day and the period of prayer;

Whereas section 4 of the National Moment of Remembrance Act (Public Law 106-579) provides, "The minute beginning at 3:00 p.m. (local time) on Memorial Day each year is designated as the 'National Moment of Remembrance'"; and

Whereas Section 6103(a) of title 5, United States Code, provides that "Memorial Day, the last Monday in May" and "Veteran's Day, November 11" are legal public holidays: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) encourages Americans to demonstrate their support for veterans on Veterans Day each year by treating that day as a special day of reflection;

(2) encourages schools and teachers to educate students on the great contributions veterans have made to the country and its history, both while serving as members of the

United States Armed Forces and after completing their service; and

(3) requests that the President issue a proclamation each year in connection with the observance of Veterans Day calling on the people of the United States to observe that day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER) and the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I would yield for as much time as he may consume to the author of this legislation, an Army veteran of the Vietnam era, the gentleman from California (Mr. BACA).

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 237.

I want to thank Representative FILNER for his commitment to this resolution in support of our veterans. And I say "the support of our veterans." As a veteran myself who served in both the 101st and 82nd Airborne Division, I am proud to stand with our brave men and women.

Today, there are over 23 million veterans living in the United States; 165,000 in Iraq and Afghanistan. In my district, we have over 32,000 veterans. There are also many veterans who serve in Congress, and I want to thank those Members who have served this country. And I salute each and every one of the Members who have served our country.

To my fellow veterans, I commend you for your service. When our troops commit to serve our country, they make a promise to serve and to protect this country.

We also have a moral responsibility to protect the returning veterans and their families. Veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan must receive the best treatment. Sadly, for the last few years, I don't believe that our government has held its end of the bargain. The conditions at Walter Reed show us that in many cases our veterans are not receiving the care they deserve. This resolution reminds us that Veterans Day is not just a day off from school or work. This is a special day of reflection to honor those who have defended our country.

I visited Israel a few years ago. There I learned how truly they respect and honor veterans in that country. Israel calls for 1 minute of silence across the whole country. The country's emergency siren goes off at 10 a.m., and all TV and radio stations are also interrupted and programs sounding the alert. Everyone then stops whatever they are doing, working, driving, anything else, and stands in silence for those heroes who have served their country. That's paying respect.

My resolution also encourages schools to educate our young people about the contributions of our veterans to this country because they ultimately have made the sacrifice for the

freedoms that they have to be in school and to be all that they want to be.

This year, as Chair of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, I have worked closely with Hispanic veterans and the Medal of Honor veteran winners from World War II until today. The stories of courage and sacrifices I've heard from them were nothing short of amazing. They deserve to be recognized and thanked, as well as every veteran who has served our country.

I also believe a special thanks is necessary to the veterans and military families that are left behind. Too often we forget about the families and veterans who are left behind. They have sacrificed so much for their loved ones and for America, for America that we stand up with, America that we have always been with. You are the support system and the backbone for all of these veterans.

On November 11, on Veterans Day, do not forget those who are the true heroes of this country. Reflect on the true meaning of Veterans Day, and remember the sacrifices made by so many proud American sons and daughters that we will honor on that day.

I urge my colleagues to support this resolution. Veterans Day is about our heroes.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I take great pleasure in urging my colleagues to support House Resolution 237, urging all of America to make a special effort to honor America's veterans on November 11, introduced by a veteran of the Vietnam War, the Honorable JOE BACA.

This resolution reminds each of us of the debt we owe to those whose sacrifices have made America the beacon of freedom throughout the world. America's holidays remind us of important events and persons in our Nation's history. It is significant that veterans are honored with two holidays that recognize the important role of those who wear the uniform.

□ 1400

Veterans have assaulted heavily defended beaches, jumped from aircraft under heavy fire, shivered in frozen foxholes, slogged through malaria-ridden jungles, and endured horrible abuses as prisoners of war. Veterans have survived incredible hardships, they have suffered wounds, and far too many have paid the ultimate price of freedom. They have often experienced long separations from families, and they serve in the outposts of freedom while their fellow citizens enjoy the fruits of everyday life in America. Each of them, from the Army or Marine infantrymen on patrol, to the sailor deep in the bowels of an aircraft carrier, to the airmen miles above the ground sets an example for the rest of us.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to recall how Veterans Day came to be. In 1921, an unknown World War I American soldier was buried in Arlington

National Cemetery. This site on a hillside overlooking the Potomac River and the City of Washington became the focal point of reverence for America's veterans. Similar ceremonies occurred earlier in England and France where an unknown soldier was buried in each of the nation's highest place of honor, in England West Minster Abby, in France the Arc de Triomphe.

These memorial gestures all took place on November 11, giving universal recognition to the celebrated ending of World War I fighting at 11 a.m., November 11, 1918, the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month. The day became known as Armistice Day. The first celebration using the term "Veterans Day" occurred in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1947.

Raymond Weeks, a World War II veteran, organized National Veterans Day, which included a parade and other festivities to honor all veterans. The event was held on November 11, then designated Armistice Day. Later, U.S. Representative Edward Rees of Kansas proposed a bill that would change Armistice Day to Veterans Day. In 1954, Congress passed the bill that President Eisenhower signed proclaiming November 11 as Veterans Day. Raymond Weeks received the Presidential Citizens Medal from President Reagan in November 1982. Weeks' local parade and ceremonies are now an annual event celebrated nationwide.

Mr. Speaker, I again suggest this most fitting of resolutions is worthy of unanimous support for my colleagues. As Mr. FILNER said in the previous bill, we need to go further.

Mr. Speaker, there is no better way to honor our veterans on Veterans Day than to ensure funding for their medical care and other benefits. That is why I call on my friends on the other side of the aisle to appoint conferees for the Military Construction and VA appropriations bill.

We are almost a month into the new fiscal year and there is no practical reason that this bill cannot pass and become law. It won't be long before this apparent political ploy will begin to affect the care our Nation's warriors receive. Let's appoint conferees and ensure that the VA can continue to give our veterans the excellent care that they deserve.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I would yield such time as he may consume to our Vietnam aviator, Mr. BOSWELL of Iowa.

Mr. BOSWELL. Thank you, Chairman FILNER, and all of you who have worked on veterans events this day and these last several months. We appreciate it very much.

Mr. Speaker, as veterans we know the sacrifice that our servicemembers pay each day. Whether currently deployed in Iraq, Afghanistan, Korea, or wherever they might be around the world, serving on active duty or serving in the Army Reserves or on the Na-

tional Guard, our men and women in uniform sacrifice for our freedom.

Oftentimes when we speak of our key military assets we are referring to the carriers and the stealth bombers and the tanks or the fighter planes. Well, while those are all impressive, none are more impressive than our brave men and women in uniform. I think, in fact, I know, they are our greatest military asset. The men and women who serve our Nation are the best educated, trained and equipped fighting force in the world. Because of this, I am proud to stand with my colleague (Mr. BACA) and all the rest of you to encourage communities and schools around the country to recognize the contributions veterans have made to our country and to our history.

It is often said, but we will say it again, a grateful Nation will always remember those who sacrifice so much in preserving our freedom. If we are to continue to have the very best of our Nation serve, we must continue to give them assurances that their service will not be forgotten. By granting all veterans who served before them the recognition, care and respect promised, tomorrow's veterans will have the reassurance in knowing their future needs will be addressed.

I am very proud to stand here to co-sponsor this bill today and encourage the House to pass H. Res. 237. Honor Veterans Day. It's something we have a privilege to do.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE).

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the resolution offered by Representative BACA of California. I applaud him for bringing this resolution to the floor today and I am very proud to support his efforts.

With a district with so many veterans, I can honestly stand here today and tell you that Veterans Day in my district is on par with the love of God, mom and apple pie. Almost every town and municipality in the eight counties that make up my congressional district goes out of their way to hold a public event celebrating the accomplishments of our Nation's veterans.

Traveling around my district, I have met literally thousands of men and some women who recount their stories of military service with pride and with joy. They tell of the bravery of their comrades, of the sacrifices to protect the innocent and the weak and the memories of those killed in action.

The resolution before us, House Resolution 237, is a good sense of the House that encourages the celebration of Veterans Day. Veterans Day is not just another day to go to the mall or look for Veterans Day sales but, rather, to honor those who have served our country.

These brave soldiers fought for our freedoms and the liberties of our Nation around the world, including France, England, Poland, Vietnam,

Korea, Kuwait, Iraq and Afghanistan. The actions of the American military throughout the history of our Nation have helped advance the cause of freedom around the globe and protect citizens from attack from foreign powers, and today from attacks from terrorists.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage every American to adopt the spirit of this resolution in celebrating Veterans Day and show our veterans how much we appreciate their sacrifice and the time served. May God bless our soldiers and our veterans.

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. Speaker, in closing, again, I encourage everyone, certainly we are all anxiously awaiting to get to vote "yes" on this very, very important resolution. I want to thank Mr. BACA for bringing this to our attention and doing the work that it took to get it on the floor. A special thanks to Chairman FILNER, Mr. BUYER, again, for working together and getting all of the bills that we have done today on the floor. I think it represents a tremendous amount of work. As always, I want to thank the staffs on both sides who worked so hard in preparing these things and actually getting it to fruition.

So with that, again, I yield back the balance of my time.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H. Res. 237.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BLUMENAUER). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, this is an important resolution, and we have heard the many reasons why, and I thank Mr. BACA for bringing this resolution to the floor. But after we give our speeches on Veterans Day, after we have given all the tributes, let's come back and do some real work that we have to do to really honor our veterans.

I agree with the gentleman from Arkansas. Let's pass that appropriations bill. If you add the money that is in the appropriations bill for 2008 with the continuing resolution we did earlier this year and the supplemental resolution we did earlier, we have added more than \$13 billion for the health care of our veterans for this year over last year. That is a 30 percent increase. That is unprecedented in the history of the VA and will put in place all the programs that many of us want and know that they are needed, deserved and earned.

But let's go further than that. Let's pass together a GI Bill for the 21st century, a bill that not only increases the benefits to a realistic fashion for education and home loans, but brings in

the Guard and Reserve units to be eligible for the GI Bill's benefits. They are doing half the fighting in Iraq and yet do not have full benefits when they return home. So let us include the Guard and Reserve.

Let us include an absolute right to mental health treatment. We cannot neglect mental health, PTSD (post traumatic stress disorder), and other mental conditions. While we can deal with the visible wounds a lot easier, we cannot forget the invisible ones.

Let us work together to end that atrocious claims backlog. Over 600,000 claims for disability compensation are pending at the VA. People have died while waiting for their claim to be adjudicated. Others have lost their home because they didn't have the income. We can cut through that bureaucracy, not just add, as the budget has, 1,000 more people, but really look at a whole new way, a nonadversarial way of dealing with the claims for disability. We can do that.

For too many people, VA means "veterans adversary." VA should mean "veterans advocate". We can do that. Let us make sure that every young man and woman that comes back from Iraq and Afghanistan is diagnosed for both traumatic brain injury and PTSD, post traumatic stress disorder. We are going to let tens of thousands of young men and women out of the service without adequately understanding these wounds, some of whose symptoms are invisible for some time. They are ticking time bombs that, coming back to society, will create enormous problems for our social structure. So let's diagnose it. Let's treat it early. Let's bring the family in. Let's make sure that we have treated the mental illness that is so prominent in a war like this that we are unfortunately pursuing.

Let us end homelessness for our veterans in America. We can do this. This is not rocket science. We know what it takes. We have all, as I said earlier, been to Stand-Downs. We know how to bring the community together to give homeless veterans the support they need to reintegrate. And I tell you, we are already seeing the problems that we saw in Vietnam. We have suicide rates of our current vets that are the highest rates since Vietnam. We have homeless Iraqi vets on the street. So let us not make the same mistake again that we did in Vietnam, but let us remember we have both new veterans and older veterans. We have to serve both. This Nation can do it, we should do it, and working together, we will do it.

Each year on Veterans Day, Americans come together to honor our Nation's heroes: the 25 million veterans that have served our country.

House Resolution 237 encourages Americans to demonstrate their support for veterans. It is important to let these heroes know that this grateful Nation honors their service to our country.

On this 88th Veterans Day, I urge all Americans to take the time to show appreciation to those who have answered the call to duty.

Although, we can never adequately thank them for their service and sacrifice to our Nation, today, on Veterans Day and everyday, we can humbly salute our brave veterans and soldiers.

Our nation has a proud legacy of supporting the men and women who have worn the uniform in defense of this country.

As a nation, we have a sacred pact with all those who served in uniform and we owe them a debt of gratitude.

Our country is founded on the principles of democracy, American values and faith that those who fight for freedom will defeat those whose cause is unjust.

I know I speak for the Nation when I say that we stand united behind our courageous men and women in uniform.

We must be united in seeing that every soldier, sailor, airman and marine is welcomed back with all the care and compassion this grateful Nation can bestow.

No other group of Americans has stood stronger and braver for our democracy than our troops and veterans.

Veterans Day should not be observed just once a year—our Nation's heroes must be celebrated, honored and remembered for their service to our Nation—the whole year through.

Veterans have kept their promise to serve our Nation—and we, as a free and democratic country, must keep our promises to our veterans.

As Chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, it is my honor to serve the veterans of this Nation and I encourage my fellow Americans to do the same.

I encourage all Americans to reach out to veterans. Thank them and their families for their amazing sacrifice. Learn more about their great contributions to our country and gain the wisdom of their personal stories of our nation's history.

Americans have learned, again, the truth behind the inscription on the Korean War Memorial—"Freedom is not free." And no one has paid a higher price and sacrifice for our freedom than our veterans.

Pause to remember the noble service and high sacrifices of those who have worn this Nation's uniform.

On Veterans Day and the whole year through, join me and take the time to show your gratitude to those who have answered the call to duty.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair would remind all persons in the gallery that they are here as guests of the House, and that any manifestation of approval or disapproval of the proceedings or any audible conversation is in violation of the rules of the House.

The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 237.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1415

THIRD HIGHER EDUCATION EXTENSION ACT OF 2007

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3927) to temporarily extend the programs under the Higher Education Act of 1965, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3927

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Third Higher Education Extension Act of 2007".

SEC. 2. EXTENSION OF PROGRAMS.

Section 2(a) of the Higher Education Extension Act of 2005 (Public Law 109-81; 20 U.S.C. 1001 note) is amended by striking "October 31, 2007" and inserting "April 30, 2008".

SEC. 3. RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.

Nothing in this Act, or in the Higher Education Extension Act of 2005 as amended by this Act, shall be construed to limit or otherwise alter the authorizations of appropriations for, or the durations of, programs contained in the amendments made by the Higher Education Reconciliation Act of 2005 (Public Law 109-171) and the College Cost Reduction and Access Act of 2007 (P.L. 110-84) to the provisions of the Higher Education Act of 1965 and the Taxpayer-Teacher Protection Act of 2004.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HINOJOSA) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. KELLER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 3927, a bill to extend the Higher Education Act through April 30, 2008. This bill is very straightforward. It simply extends the current programs authorized under the Higher Education Act until April 30, 2008, giving us the time to fully consider and complete the reauthorization.

Mr. Speaker, we are making progress. With bipartisan support and the President's signature, we are making a historic investment in student financial aid in the College Cost Reduction and Access Act. We have also laid the groundwork to reauthorize the other core higher education programs, including teacher preparation, developing and strengthening institutions, college readiness and outreach programs, international education programs, graduate education, and many others.